



City of Austin - Floodplain Office

Costs to consider when determining substantial damage

In deciding whether a building has been substantially damaged, the City must determine an appropriate cost to repair the building back to its pre-flood condition. Below is a list of items that must be considered in the repair costs. These items are taken directly from a FEMA guidance document entitled, "Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage Desk Reference, FEMA P-758, May 2010."

Items Included in Repair Costs

Items that must be included in the cost of repair are those that are directly associated with the building. For example:

- Materials and labor, including the estimated value of donated or discounted materials and owner or volunteered labor
- Demolition and construction debris disposal (estimate the hours it took to demolish if already complete)
- Construction management and supervision
- Contractor's overhead and profit
- Sales taxes on materials
- Structural elements and exterior finishes, including:
 - o Foundations; monolithic or other types of concrete slabs; bearing walls, tie beams, trusses; joists, beams, subflooring, framing, ceilings; interior non-bearing walls
 - o Exterior finishes (e.g., brick, stucco, siding, painting, and trim)
 - o Windows and exterior doors
 - o Roofing, gutters, and downspouts
 - o Hardware
 - o Attached decks and porches
- Interior finish elements, including:
 - o Floor finishes (e.g., hardwood, ceramic, vinyl, linoleum, stone, and wall-to-wall carpet over subflooring)
 - o Bathroom tiling and fixtures
 - o Wall finishes (e.g., drywall, paint, stucco, plaster, paneling, and marble)
 - o Built-in cabinets (e.g., kitchen, utility, entertainment, storage, and bathroom)
 - o Interior doors
 - o Interior finish carpentry
 - o Built-in bookcases and furniture
 - o Hardware
 - o Insulation

- Utility and service equipment, including:
 - o HVAC equipment
 - o Plumbing fixtures and piping
 - o Electrical wiring, outlets, and switches
 - o Light fixtures and ceiling fans
 - o Security systems
 - o Built-in appliances
 - o Central vacuum systems
 - o Water filtration, conditioning, and recirculation systems

Items Excluded from Repair Costs

Items that can be excluded are those that are not directly associated with the building. The following list characterizes the types of costs that may be excluded:

- Clean-up and trash removal
- Costs to temporarily stabilize a building so that it is safe to enter to evaluate required repairs
- Costs to obtain or prepare plans and specifications
- Land survey costs
- Permit fees and inspection fees
- Carpeting and re-carpeting installed over finished flooring such as wood or tiling
- Outside improvements, including landscaping, irrigation, sidewalks, driveways, fences, yard lights, swimming pools, pool enclosures, and detached accessory structures (e.g., garages, sheds, and gazebos)
- Costs required for the minimum necessary work to correct violations of health, safety, and sanitary codes that existed before the flood (Note: This applies to the substantial improvement definition only)
- Plug-in appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, and stoves

The City's floodplain regulations regarding substantial damage are derived from the International Building Code and the International Residential Code as amended in the City's Land Development Code Section 25-12-3, Section 1612. If you have questions about the floodplain regulations regarding the substantial damage rules, please contact the Floodplain Office hotline at 512-974-2843. Please leave a message on the hotline, and City staff will return your call.